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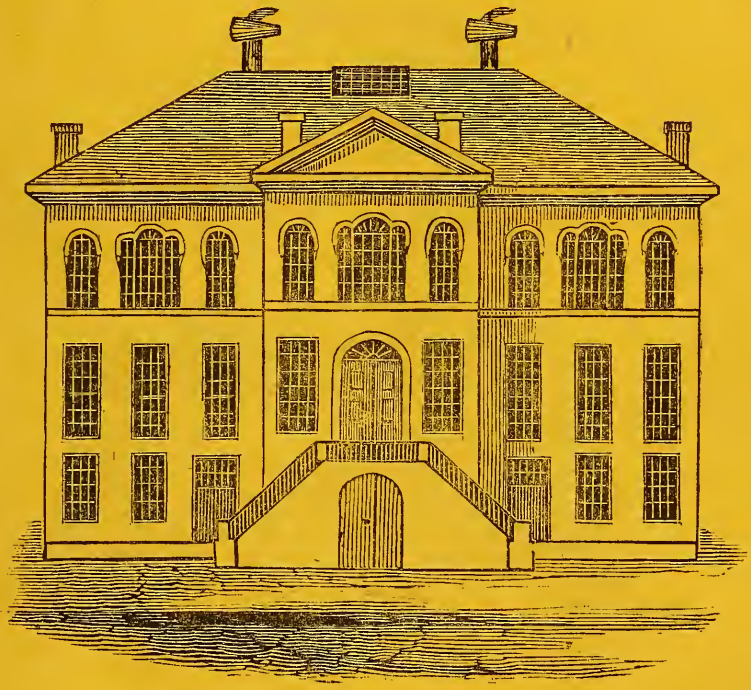
AWFUL DISCLOSURES

AND

STARTLING DEVELOPEMENTS,

IN RELATION TO THE LATE

PARKMAN TRAGEDY.



A VIEW OF THE MEDICAL COLLEGE IN NORTH GROVE STREET, BOSTON, WHERE THE HORRIBLE TRAGEDY IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN PERFORMED.

WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE REMAINS OF THE LATE DR. GEORGE PARKMAN, AND THE SUBSEQUENT ARREST OF

PROFESSOR JOHN W. WEBSTER.

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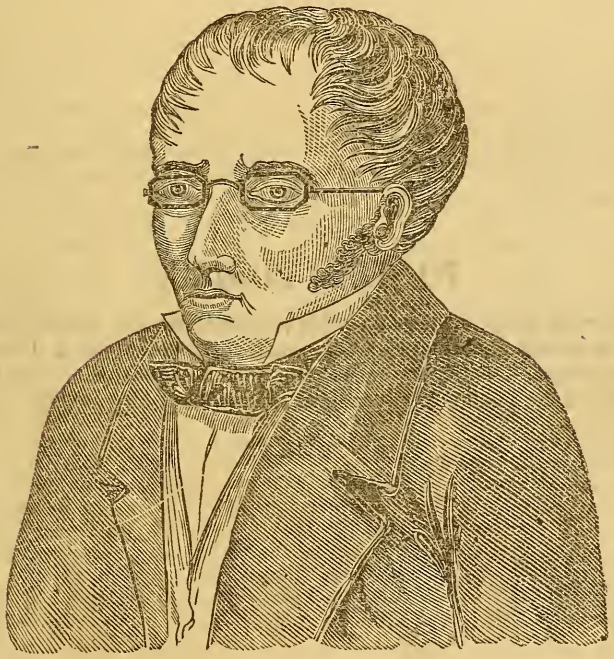

PROFESSOR JOHN W. WEBSTER,

OF

HARVARD MEDICAL COLLEGE.

1849

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TO THE PUBLIC.

For the following facts, contained in this pamphlet, we are indebted to the "Boston Daily Herald," in which, through the indefatigable labors of JOHN A. FRENCH, Esq., its enterprising proprietor, the fullest, most lucid, and most correct account of this affair has been laid before the public, in advance of all the other city papers.

THE PARKMAN TRAGEDY.

At no time, within the recollection of any citizen of Boston, has there been so great, and so general an excitement, as was occasioned by the sudden and unaccountable disappearance of Dr. George Parkman, one of our wealthiest citizens. Almost every resident of Boston was familiar with the face, form, and gait of Dr. Parkman, and when he was no longer seen threading our busy streets on his usual errands of business, the enquiry of "Where is he?" fell from the lips of all who knew him, and were accustomed to perform with him their business trnsactions.

Dr. Parkman, as we have already said, was a man of wealth, and also of high standing in community, and possessed of distinguished connexions. On Friday November 23d, Dr George Parkman was missed by his family and friends, and immediate search was made to endeavour to ascertain his whereabouts, but without avail. Intelligence having been communicated to the City Marshall, Francis Tukey, of the unavailing search of Dr. Parkman's friends, the officers of the Police were sent out in every direction to endeavour to reclaim the missing man.

As an additional inducement to continue the search, Robert G. Shaw, Esq., a near relative of Dr. Parkman, offered a reward of $3000 for the recovery of the Dr's body, and such information as should lead to the detection of the individual who had dealt foully with him, providing such a course had been pursued towards him.

Various rumours were put in circulation in reference to the Doctor's having been seen in different places. At one time it was reported that he was seen, on the day he was missed, "to pass over Cambridge Bridge in company with an Irishman"—again "he was seen in New York"—and again "in Milton;" all these places were immediately resorted to by the Police and their investigations only went to show how liable people are to be mistaken, and also served to caution them how they put in circulation reports which were not well founded.

Every one seemed petrified with astonishment, and the unparalleled excitement in the City produced a complete paralysis in business.

Groups of anxious individuals might be seen upon the corners of the streets, and crowds convened in the various public places, talking over the wonderful disappearance.

At length the public were completely astounded by the appearance of an article in one of our city papers, which implicated a *certain distinguished Professor!* "Who can it be?" enquired anxious multitudes. The secret was at length out, and *Professor John W. Webster of Harvard Medical College* was arrested on suspicion and conveyed to Leverett Street Jail.

The facts which appear to implicate Professor Webster as the murderer of Dr. Parkman, are first, that on the Friday of the Dr's disappearance, he was seen by several persons to enter the Medical College. 2dly, Professor Webster told the Rev. Dr. Parkman, brother of the deceased, that he (Webster) had paid the defunct the sum of $470 on a mortgage of personal property, the very day, and about the time he was last seen. But when asked to exhibit the receipt for the money paid, he said that he had taken none. Yesterday the Professor called on Mr. Waterman, tinman, in Court street, and ordered a led or tin box to be manufactured for him, the top of which he was to sodder on himself. The box was to be sent to Cambridge when it was finished.

It is said also that when Professor Webster was arrested yesterday, he manifested the utmost trepidation, then called for a glass of water, and having by great exertion swallowed a small quantity immediately vomited it up again. His conduct at the jail was that of a maniac.

Dr. Webster is about fifty years of age, has a wife and five children, and has hitherto borne an unblemished character. His family, of course, are in a state of deepest agony.

It has been ascertained that Dr. Parkman,

just before going into the college had purchased some articles of food at a provision store, near the college, saying that he would call for them shortly which he did not do.

Suspicion was first directed to the Professor's room on account of the fact that a fire had been kept constantly burning there for the past week, and even, ever since the excitement. Such a circumstance was, in this case unusual, as there had been no fire in that room for a long time previous.

Since the excitement attendant upon the disappearance of Dr. Parkman, Professor Webster has kept his room carefully locked, which occasioned some suspicion on the part of those who have succeeded in partially unravelling this dreadful mystery.

On Friday last, between one and two o'clock' Dr. Parkman stopped at a grocery store owned by him in Cambridge street. He there left a small bag of lettuce seed, and ordered sugar and other articles for his family. When he left, he stated to the grocer that he should return in five minutes for the bag, as he was only going to the hospital in Grove street.

The Dr. was seen to enter the Hospital by several individuals, but no person can be found who saw him come out. His person is well known in that vicinity, and it would have been almost an impossibility for him to leave the Hospital at that time of day, without being seen and recognized by some person.

Attempts have been made to trace the Dr. to Cambridge, immediately after leaving the College, but those who knew Dr. Parkman's correct habits, were persuaded that he would not have undertaken to go there, so near to his dinner hour, and when in the immediate vicinity of his house.

Professor Webster came into town on Sunday last and visited the College, a circumstance very unusual with him. He stated to parties with whom he conversed, that seeing a notice in the evening papers of Dr. Parkman's disappearance, he came into town for the purpose of notifying the family, where, when and how he last saw him.

Professor Webster said that he owed Dr. Parkman a personal mortgage, and that, between the hours of one and two o'clock on Friday, he (Professor Webster) paid Dr. Parkman the sum of $483,62, for which he took a receipt. Mr. Webster said that Dr. Parkman appeared as usual, and he noticed nothing particular or singular in his behavior different from his ordinary habits.

From other sources we learn that the mortgage was over due, and had been over due some considerable time; that Dr. Parkman had pressed the Professor for payment, which had been promised several times, but it was not forthcoming.

In this state of facts, it is not unreasonable to suppose that—as rumor has already asserted—an altercation took place. What passed within the walls of that private room, no man may ever know, but it is reduced to a certainty, almost absolute, that Dr. Parkman never crossed the threshold of that door.

Dr. Webster is a Professor of Anatomy in the College, and as far as the examination has at present progressed, there has no way been found by which the remains could have been placed in the position in which it was discovered, except by raising the flooring in the Professor's room.

From many circumstances that have transpired during the week suspicion have been strongly and unceasingly directed towards Professor Webster. His altered manner, his extreme nervousness, his absent mindedness; all tending to prove some powerful causes operating upon his mind.

His door has been carefully locked during the week, and no person has been permitted to open it. This is contrary to his usual practice, and the custom which he has generally followed of allowing free ingress and egress to his rooms, on all proper occasions.

In the College there is a vault, into which the offal arising from dissecting is thrown. In Professor Webster's private room there is another vault used by him to throw the residuum of his laboratory, arising from chemical experiments given in his lectures to students.

This vault was used for that express purpose and no other. Professor Webster was not connected with the department of anatomy. He had nothing to do with it. In that vault no offal from bodies could possibly get there. It had no right there, much less, any distinguishable portion of a human body.

But in this private vault, the lower part of the body of a man has been found.

The circumstances under which this astounding discovery have been made, we have already alluded to. This morning the official authorities, together with the relatives and friends of the deceased assembled at the College and proceeded to extricate the remains so found.

After the closest investigation, the committee and authorities were forcibly led to the painful conclusion that the mangled remnants before them, were those of their missing father and friend. A discovery calculated to fill them with profound grief and horror.

The proceedings of the committee of investigation were conducted with the greatest secrecy; and it is well that they were as the public were in such a high state of excitement.

The arrest of Professor Webster was made by officers Clapp, Starkweather, and Spurr. They went to his residence at seven o'clock last evening, and although the Professor knew they were police officers, he manifested not the least alarm, but cheerfully accepted their invitation to ride into town. They conversed in a familiar manner upon ordinary topics until they reached Leverett street jail, when the carriage stopped. On being desired to alight, and ob-

serving the place to which he had been conveyed, a sudden tremor shook his frame, but no other emotion was at that moment exhibited. Shortly after the bolt of the cell was drawn, his system underwent a terrible reaction, and in an hour's time, he was laboring under a state of mental and physical excitement which we are told by an eye witness resembled the most violent stages of the hydrophobia.

The proceedings of the policemen with his assistants, in making the breach into Professor Webster's private vault, were ordered and conducted by friends of the family. At least, we have been credibly informed that such is the fact.

A posse of officers, armed with sufficient authority, proceeded to Professor Webster's house this morning for the purpose of examining the premises. They had not, up to the hour of going to press, returned. What discoveries are made there, if there should be any, we will detail in our next edition.

It is asserted, but not upon sufficient authority, that the calcined bones of the head and trunk of a man have been discovered upon Professor Webster's premises in the College. It seems marvellous that a Professor of chemistry of Mr. Webster's acknowledged profoundity, should take such means to destroy evidences of crime if any has been committed. He had abundant other and better means at command, if such had been his object.

The extraction of the mutilated remains took place at about 10 o'clock this morning. From early day until nearly noon the vicinity of the College has been the scene of the most intense excitement and curiosity. We have never witnessed a scene of a similar nature in this city. At one time the number around the building could not have been less than *one thousand.*

Among the rumors that prevail, mention is made of Dr. Parkman's watch having been found together with a portion of the money, which he had about him, in Professor Webster's private room. Another rumor say that a considerable portion of his clothing has been discovered there, while another says, that in the ashes, the buttons only of his clothing have been identified.

We called at the jail about one o'clock, and learned that Professor Webster passed the night in the greatest agony and agitation. He was carefully watched, but no demonstration of violence on himself was manifested. The ridiculous rumor that prevailed in State street, of his attempting suicide, had not the slightest foundation in fact.

His conduct during the day has not been materially different from what it was during the night. He holds no conversation with the jailors. No persons are permitted to see him but his immediate family, a particular friend, Mr. Cunningham, and his counsel.

While we were waiting at the jail office, several of Prof. W.'s particular friends called to see him, but they were politely informed that the rules forbade it. They expressed themselves firmly of the opinion that Prof. Webster could triumphantly vindicate himself against every charge that might be brought against him.

We understand that Prof. Webster has retained the services of Hon. Franklin Dexter as his counsel.

The arraignment will not be made till Monday morning. It is expected that he will then be placed at the bar of the police court, to answer to a charge of wilful murder.

We have given in our sketches, the best information we could obtain from the best sources open to us. Omitting a thousand and one rumors, we have diligently sought for the truth, and believe that every material statement published by us may be relied upon.

The examination of the remains of Dr. Parkman is now going on under the direction of Coroner Pratt. It is supposed that a report will not be made before Monday.

We visited the Medical Hospital this afternoon at four o'clock, and found every thing perfectly quiet. There were about thirty or forty persons present. On rapping at a side window, we attracted the notice of officer Starkweather, who, without opening the door, informed us that there was no admission for any person. Some half dozen officers were then in the hall of the hospital, ready to give warning to the chief, at the first demonstration of a hostile nature.

At the same hour, we visited the Leverett street jail, and learned from the jailor that the professor had become much less nervous and excited. He had been visited by his counsel, whose advice had apparently alleviated the dreadful excitement which, since his incarceration, had been manifested by him.

From other sources, partly to be credited and partly not, we have learned the following incidents:—

There was seen, and actually noted down, the fact that the professor's chemical experiments took up a much larger portion of his time, during the past week, than he was wont to bestow upon them; and satisfactory proof seemed to rest on the mind of Littlefield that the professor was in his laboratory all night, on the Friday that Dr. Parkman was missing.

A boy who lives opposite the foundry, stated that on Saturday night last, one of the windows of Professor Webster's room was opened, and a singular stench issued from it; but, as such odors often occur in the neighborhood, it created no excitement.

An Irishman, by the name of Patrick McGinnis, who lives in what is called the "black hole," in Cypress street, harangued the multitude, stating in his speech that he saw Dr. Parkman go into the college on Friday morning; he came out at half-past one o'clock, and returned at six in the evening. This man has been employed to take away the offal, or the

relics of the dead bodies, and empty them into the different recepticles of filth.

He was employed to go on an errand, and, in passing up the stairs, heard what is supposed to be an altercation in the professor's study; the voice of Dr. Parkman he distinctly heard, and could swear to, and the subject in dispute was the payment of a sum of money which the Dr. said had been due for some time, and that he was tired of further promises. He stopped at the door for a few moments, and heard a reply made either that "he or you would not have much more trouble about the matter—it had annoyed him to death, and he was heartily sick of it."

There were many angry words used by both parties, but he, McGinnis, not thinking any thing of the matter, left the door, and proceeded to perform the errand that he had been instructed to do.

During the investigations that were had in Professor Webster's private room on Saturday morning, a peculiar appearance of parts of the floor was noticed, as though some portions of it, in spots, had been very carefully and cleanly washed.

Suspecting that this appearance could not have been produced by simple washing, one of the gentlemen present wet his finger with spittle, rubbed it over the cleansed spots and tasted of it. The presence of a powerful acid was very apparent.

Those spots were, undoubtedly, the places where Dr. Parkman's life tide ebbed away. To hide these evidences of crime—if crime there was—sulphuric acid was applied, which, while it lapped up the blood, left certain other evidence, full as attractive and unmistakeable in its nature.

Iv the search of Prof. Webster's premises, at Cambridge, on Saturday, the officers did not succeed in finding any papers or money that could be traced to Dr. Parkman. They found, however, a portion of silver which had been melted, in the cinders under the grate of his laboratory, and in the same room some false teeth, which are known to have been the same worn by Dr. Parkman.

These, so far as we are informed, were all the evidences in reference to this dreadful affair, that could be found at the professor's house.

The mutilated remains that were found in the professor's water closet and in the vault, have been put together, and fully identified as being part of the body of the unfortunate Dr. Parkman.

On Friday morning, the day when Dr. Parkman was missing, a gentleman called at his house in Walnut street. After a brief interview at the door, they parted, the Dr. appointing to meet the gentleman that afternoon between the hours of one and two o'clock. What connection this appointment had with his meeting Prof. Webster at the hour named, we do not pretend to say. We give the simple fact, as any thing referring to Dr. Parkman's transactions on that ill fated day are interesting, if not important.

On the night of the arrest, last Friday, Prof. Webster was taken from the jail to his room in the college, about the hour of midnight. His demeanor is described by an eye witness as being the most painful sight he has ever seen.—When brought into the room, a convulsive shudder pervaded his frame, depriving him of all power or control over himself.

He could not articulate, but when questioned he bowed himself to the ground, a picture of the greatest extremity of woe. He was, in a most pitiable and emphatic sense, "a fearful man."

In explanation of the suspicions which were elicited towards the professor, because his door was not opened, we learn that Mr. Littlefield had, previous to this time, been charged with duty of sweeping and arranging the room, which he performed every morning. The door being locked without apparent cause attracted attention.

Another circumstance. Professor Webster was known to have been in this private room on that Friday until after midnight—a thing very unusual.

A letter was sent to the Cambridge post office, supposed to be in the handwriting of Dr. Webster, somewhat disguised. It was found by Dr. Ely Kingsley, postmaster of East Cambridge, among his letters on the 30th November. Dr. Kingsley looked at it, and observing the direction, "Francis Tukey, Boston," concluded to bring it over in person. The letter was apparently written with the aid of a stick, some of the words mis-spelt, and altogether written and folded in a bungling manner. We annex it:

"Dr. Parkman was taken on board the ship Hercules, and this is all I dare tell you for fear I shall be killed, I was one of the men at East Cambridge. I took his watch, and as I was going along the road that leads to the long bridge to Boston, I threw it over for fear that I should be detected."

There was no signature.

Last evening, as officers Tarlton, Fuller, Haath, and Bateman were prosecuting their search for papers and documents calculated to throw more light on this tragic affair, Mr. Tarlton proposed that they should search under the flooring of Professor Webster's private room, which was accordingly done, and lo! they struck at once on a chest, or box, which upon examination proved to be an old tea chest. In the upper part of this receptacle they found first a large quantity of mineral and other geological specimens, all of them appropriately labelled in Mr. Webster's hand writing. After removing quite a number of these stones, it was proposed between them to lift the chest out and capsize it; this was instantly done, and the

mutilated trunk of evidently an old man and a bowie knife, encrusted with blood, were tumbled out from the bottom. The remains presented appearance which tend very strongly to the belief that murder had been committed. It will be remembered that when search was first made in this affair, the entire right leg as high as the hip joint, the left leg up to the knee joint, parts of the head, and some mineral teeth had been recovered. In the exposure of the box last evening, the trunk and left thigh were found in the following condition:—the abdomen had been opened and the intestines taken out, the cartilages of the ribs had been separated, and the lungs, liver, and heart removed, the left thigh had then, by extreme violence, been bent up forward, ard forced into the cavity of the chest, the ribs again let down over it, and the whole compressed into the box, which was then stuffed all around with tar, which is known to be a highly disinfecting agent; but as the remains occupied considerable room, a large number of mineral specimens to the amount of about one hundred weight, were forced in, to keep the body down.

It was also discovered that two stabs had been inflicted on the left side of the body, one in the immediate region of the heart, and the other about three inches below, which wounds were evidently bestowed by the bowie knife found in the box with the body. This knife was about eight inches long in the blade, and one inch and a quarter in width; either of these wounds, to the depth to which they probably penetrated, would have caused death; it is, however, impossible to ascertain the exact depth of the wounds, as the vitals on which they took effect have been removed, but they must at least have been four inches in extent, as the breadth of the orifices show the full size of the knife, which tapers away gradually at least four inches from the point.

An examination by experienced physicians and surgeons, will be commenced to-day, in order, if possible, to identify the different portions of the human frame just found in Professor Webster's apartment as those of Doctor Parkman.

All last night the police were on duty with extra force, the chief, Mr. Tukey. being all the time present, ready for any emergency that might arise, but, thanks to the sagacious measures of his Honor Mayor Bigelow, a disturbance was avoided.

Had the parties at the college last night met simultaneously at the spot, we doubt not an attempt of some kind would have been made to destroy the building.

P. S. We have made further inquiries concerning the letter supposed to have been written by Professor Webster and sent through the Cambridge post office, and arrive at the conclusion that there is at least considerable doubt whether it is really in the hand writing of the accused.

The manuscript has been compared with that of Prof. W., and if it was written by him, the evidences thereof have almost been completely disguised.

Knowing that the military of our city had received orders from our worthy and diligent Mayor to be in readiness at a moment's calling, we paid a visit to the National Lancer and the City Light Guard armory, and it appeared that the Lancers were dismissed at 8 1-2 o'clock, with injunctions to parade in front of their armory at the ringing of the bell, armed and equipped, according to law, for immediate service. We found Captain White of the Lancers and one or two of his officers up and dressed at the armory of the City Guards, ready for duty as he always is with his gallant corps, at the shortest notice. The City Guards, under their gallant commander, Captain N. A. Thompson—this admirable corps of our citizen soldiery were mustered in their strength at their armory in Faneuil Hall, and were prepared to act at a minute's notice; they are, we believe, considered as the crack corps of our independent soldiery. The serviceable and splendid company of the Boston Artillery, under command of their energetic and much loved commander, Captain W. W. Bullock, were kept in a state of expectancy till ten o'clock, with the same orders for future action as were issued to the companies previously named.

The tin box ordered by Professor Webster of Mr. Nathaniel Waterman, was spoken for on Friday morning last, the day of the arrest.—Mr. Waterman says that the professor was in a great hurry for it. It is about the size of a tea chest. His workmen, however, were not able to finish it in time, and the article now remains in his store, marked with Prof. Webster's name.

The extraordinary size of the box, corresponding as it does with the tea chest that was found secreted in Professor Webster's private room, leads strongly to the inference that it was intended for the identical tea chest, in which were found the remains of a human body. It would seem as if the weight of testimony against the professor is already sufficient to crush any man. But we earnestly hope the public will suspend their judgment until the other side is heard.

The proceedings of the committee of investigation have been kept profoundly secret up to this time, every person connected with it being pledged to silence, so that no information, positive or negative, can be obtained from any one connected with it.

The object of this profound and carefully guarded examination appears, at a first glance, to be without any proper motive; but we think that a careful examination of the desultory accounts which we have published will show that that committee look farther and beyond the arrest which has already been made.

Though many of the facts that have come to

light strongly inculpate Professor Webster, we have some reason to believe that suspicions and investigations tend another way, which may possibly exonerate the professor from all criminality in this dreadful and most mysterious affair.

If it shall be proved that some person other than the professor had access to his private rooms; if it shall be proved that keys of every room in the building were intrusted to one individual; if it shall appear that this person had reasons of his own for bringing disgrace upon the college or infamy upon one of its professors, then the reasons for this silent investigation are apparent. We dare not venture an opinion upon these points.

One thing is certain. A body, or portions of a body, were found where none ought to be. How did it come there? This is the great point for investigation. Whether the body found is that of Dr. Parkman or not, the inquisition is carried on solely to this question, How did it come there? By Dr. Webster's connivance, or some other means? The report of the committee will solve these pregnant questions.

The jury of inquest, summoned by Coroner Pratt, consists of—

Osmyn Brewster, foreman,
John L. Andrews,
Lewis Jones,
Pearl Martin,
Thomas Restieaux,
Hiram Merrill.

We ascertained this forenoon that Professor Webster remained very quiet last night, and his system is now free from that dreadful state of nervous excitement which pervaded it on his first incarceration. He ate a supper of oysters last evening, with apparent relish. His numerous friends will be rejoiced to learn that he has not lost his appetite.

We learn that a tremendous excitement exists in East Cambridge on this subject. Threats of violence have been made there against the college, but we do not apprehend the fulfillment of any hostile design.

A gentleman connected with this office is now at the medical college in company of the examining physicians.

The mutilated parts that have been found, and which have been kept carefully in a box, are now being put together for the purpose of identification. The proceedings are conducted by a committee of Boston physicians.

There is, we understand, no doubt of the identity of the bones that have been found.—The last and only link that is wanting is in reference to the jaw bone that has been found. This will be furnished in the most satisfactory manner by Dr. Keep, Dentist, who operated on that part for Dr. Parkman, about a fortnight previous to his disappearance.

The surprise which was manifested by the community on the afternoon of Friday, the 23d ult., and which continued to increase from day to day, as all efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of Doctor George Parkman became abortive, was followad on the morning of Saturday last, by a consternation unparalleled among our people. On the latter day, it became generally known that fragments of a human corpse had been found on the premises occupied by Doctor John W. Webster, the Professor of Chemistry in Harvard College, in the building in North Grove street, in which the Medical Lectures of Harvard University are delivered. The fact that immediately contiguous to these premises the dissecting room of the students was located led some people to believe that the remains might have been part of a subject which had been brought there for dissection, but the peculiarity of the situation in which those remains were found, and other circumstances which we shall narrate, soon gave a different version to the matter, and led to the belief that the mutilated corpse might be that of Doctor George Parkman.

So various and conflicting had been the rumors throughout the whole of Saturday last, that our endeavors during that day to obtain the facts in the case were unsatisfactory to us, and yesterday we went to the Laboratory of Doctor Webster, and there became possessed of several additional facts in relation to the matter.—To gratify the anxiety of the public, we shall give a correct account of the circumstances which led to the arrest of Dr. Webster.

It seems that a gentleman who has acted as agent for Dr. Parkman for the last fifteen years, was in the habit of seeing the doctor every day. This gentleman knew that the doctor had had an appointment with Dr. Webster, at half-past one o'clock on Friday, the 23d. He also knew that Dr. Parkman had purchased some groceries at a store on the corner of Vine and Blossom streets, about that hour, and he was the more surprised that the doctor did not call at his house, as he was accustomed to do when he was in that section of the city. When the rumor was circulated that Dr. Parkman had been seen passing the East Cambridge toll house on the afternoon of Friday, the 23d ult., in company with an Irishman, the agent of the doctor took it upon himself to inquire at a majority of the dwellings in the westerly part of Leverett street, and at the wharves on the East Cambridge side of Cragie's Bridge, whether the inmates or occupants thereof had seen a person answering to the description of Doctor Parkman, pass that way during the afternoon of Friday.

No person having been seen answering to this description, and no tidings having been heard from any other quarter, this gentleman came to the conclusion that the body of Dr. Parkman was within the walls of the Institution in North Grove street, where he had been seen at about 1 1-2 o'clock on the last mentioned day. The high standing of Dr.

Webster, and the improbability that Dr. Parkman could have met with any difficulty at this Institution, caused this agent to stand almost alone in his suspicions; and while the city authorities were almost indefatigably making enquiries for the doctor, the agent aforesaid could not divert his mind from the idea that the doctor would be found in the establishment.

Thus matters stood till the afternoon of Monday the 26th ult., when officer Starkweather, in company with Mr. Kingsley and others, reconnoitered the grounds of the Institution, but without discovering any thing, left the premises. On Tuesday the 27th ult, between eleven and half past eleven, A. M., Messrs. Starkweather and Kingsley, by order of Marshal Tukey and friends of Dr. Parkman, searched the North Grove street Institution, but found nothing which tended to show that the body of Dr. Parkman was there. On the afternoon of Thanksgiving day, officers Clapp, Fuller and Rice again searched the premises without discovering any thing, and left under the general impression that Dr. Parkman, if found at all, would be found elsewhere. On Friday, the 30th, at 4 P. M., officer Starkweather again called at the Institution and enquired for Mr. Littlefield, who is janitor of the Institution, and resides in a portion of the building. Littlefield's wife replied that he was not at home, but soon thereafter Littlefield appeared and was asked by Starkweather, whether, in the examinations which had been made of the building, every part thereof had been searched. Littlefield replied, "Yes, every part except Dr. Webster's private privy." Starkweather demanded admittance to this, but Littlefield told him it was locked and that Dr. Webster had the key.

It seems, that just before this conversation occurred between Starkweather and Littlefield, Littlefield had been engaged in drilling a hole through a wall of the Institution, through which, and only through which, the contents of that privy could be discerned. Having made an orifice and lighted a candle, he perceived under the floor of the privy what appeared to be the lower half of a human body. He then discontinued his operations and informed Dr. Bigelow of the discovery he had made. Soon thereafter, Marshal Tukey sent officers Clapp, Starkweather and Spurr, to Cambridge, to arrest Dr. Webster. Mr. Clapp found Dr. W. at his house, and informed him that they proposed to search the Institution further, and requested the Doctor to accompany them to Boston in a carriage. The Doctor made no objection, except to remark, that "every thing had been examined and it was useless to search any further," or words to that effect. The carriage started from Dr. Webster's residence at Cambridge, at half-past seven P. M., on Friday last, and during the route into the city, officer Clapp and the Doctor conversed freely about general matters and also respecting the disappearance of Dr. Parkman.

Instead, however, of proceeding to the Laboratory the hack driver, in obedience to previous orders, drove into the city over Cragie's bridge, which Dr. Webster observed, and as they passed Spring street without turning towards the Hospital, the Doctor remarked the fact and was told that the driver had probably mistaken the way. In a few minutes they reached the Jail in Leverett street, when Dr. Webster was committed and then, for the first time, informed that he was under arrest for the murder of Dr. George Parkman. The scene which followed beggars description, we have already attempted to delineate it.

As we have heard complaints that officer Clapp did not communicate to Dr. Webster at Cambridge, the fact of his arrest, we will observe, en passant, that the arrest was not named out of regard to the feelings of Dr. Webster's family, and Mr. Clapp has the satisfaction of knowing that the family appreciate his benevolent motives in making the concealment.

In order to make ourselves intelligible to our readers as to the details which we now propose to communicate, it will be necessary to give an acconnt of several of the rooms of the medical institution in North Grove street. On entering the front door of the building, at the left is the entrance to the room in which Dr. Webster officiates as Professor of Chemistry. This room occupies the greater part of the west side of the building. Directly back of it, is a small room about 16 feet by 10, which was used by the Dr. as a depository for chemical compounds and also as a study. Directly back of this, is a smaller room, about 12 feet by 5 1-2 which contains a settee, stove, and an assortment of chemicals, similar to those in the last mentioned room. This smallest room is in the northwest part of the building and has a small sink, and a window opening over the water. The three rooms just described compose the second floor of the westerly half of the building, which is separated from the easterly half by an entry, and the rooms all communicate with each other.

On passing out of the easterly side of the 16 by 10 room, through the entry, northward, you descend a pair of stairs which turn to the left, and with sixteen steps you reach the basement story, which comprises that portion of the building which is under the three rooms that we have described. This basement story was used as a laboratory by Dr. Webster, and contains all the appliances necessary for chemicel preparations. The space in this story which is surronnded by the circuitous flight of stairs which we have described, constitutes the privy to which we have alluded, in the vault of which the remains of which we have spoken, were discovered by

Mr. Littlefield. On the easterly side of this laboratory, and immediately contiguous to the side of the privy, runs a brick wall, eighteen inches in thickness, which makes, as we understand, the centre wall of the building.

On the easterly side of this wall, and underneath the basement story, is a ground floor, which is very uneven, varying in depth from the basement story, from two to six feet. This ground floor is under the easterly half of the building, and extends to the easterly side of the privy. A trap door through the basement story leads to this ground floor, and thus a passage was afforded to the side of the privy, through the wall bounding which, the orifice was made, which disclosed the remains to view.

As much has been said connecting the remains with the dissecting room contiguous to the Institution, it may be well here to describe the locality of the room appropriated for the dissection of subjects. On the westerly side of Dr. Webster's Laboratory is an entry, in which is a vault for the reception of the offal from the dissecting room. This entry is bounded by the westerly wall of the building, through which wall are doors opening into the dissecting room. This dissecting room is an appendage to the main building, about fifteen feet from roof to floor, and stands on the westerly side of the main building over the water.

On entering the Institution yesterday, we examined the localities and found them as we have described, and we now proceed to delineate the other matters which met our eye. On a rough table in the Laboratory lay the mutilated remains of a human body, comprising the thorax wanting the breast bone; the pelvis, with its fleshy parts and its appendages entire; two thighs which had been disarticulated from the pelvis, and the left leg disarticulated from the thigh. The head, arms and feet were missing. The heart was absent from the chest, but the lungs remained and were in a healthy condition. The skin and fleshy parts of the chest had been cut open and turned on each side. The contents of the thorax, with the exception of the heart, were present. The back and one side of the thorax had the appearance of having been scorched by the fire.

The pelvis and the right thigh presented a macerated appearance, as though soaked in water. The left thigh had evidently been in the fire, the hip joint presenting a dark appearance, as if smoked, while the skin was roasted. The left thigh was tied with a cord, similar to another cord found on the premises, to which were attached four cod hooks, forming a grapple. The left leg, wanting its foot, also presented a macerated appearance.

On searching the Laboratory furnace, numerous bones and fragments of bones were discovered, which were undoubtedly remains of a skull, lower jaw, right foot, leg and hand. Three blocks of artificial teeth with platinum rivets, one of which was composed of front teeth and the other two of side teeth, were also found in the furnace. Masses of silver and other metals, of some ounces in weight and a number of little shallow cups of copper which were supposed to be the remains of buttons, but which are similar to a quantity of new cups which were found in the Professor's drawers, and a pearl shirt button partially calcined, were found. Numerous pieces of glass and cinders composed the residual matters in the furnace.

In the 16 by 10 room previously described there was a large stain on the brick floor which appeared to have been recently covered with Venetian red. Similar stains were discernible in the 12 by 5 1-2 room adjoining, on the walls, settee and edge of the door. Upon the side walls of the stair-case leading to the privy, were spots and streaks, apparently of blood. Dark brown stains are observable on this hard pine stair case, which had apparently been washed by nitrate, or some solution of copper, which still is seen in drops on the side wall. A pair of ribbed, black, doeskin pantaloons, with the name of Doctor Webster written on the watch fob, were produced by one of the officers, and the bottom of the legs thereof, were spotted with what appeared to be blood, and soiled with a little Venetian red.

Chips of the wood containing the spots were taken for microscopic examination. — The metals will be submitted to chemical analysis, the bones to the most careful examination, and portions of the flesh will be examined to ascertain whether they have been subjected to the usual injections of the college dissecting room. This will determine whether these remains have any connection with the dissecting room, as the demonstrator, Dr. Ainsworth, declares that all bodies which have been received at the dissecting room this fall, have been injected with chloride of zinc or arsenic acid.

The examinations to which we have alluded are made by order of coroner Pratt, and conducted by a committee of chemists and physicians not connected with the college, among whom we observe Dr. Winslow Lewis, Jr., Dr. Martin Gay, Dr. Charles T. Jackson, and Dr. Jeffreys Wyman. We would, therefore, advise the public to await the decision of the coroner's jury, which will again meet on Wednesday next at 10 A. M., to hear the report of the examining chemists and physicians.

On Saturday afternoon last, about four o'clock, a tea-chest was discovered in the southwest corner of the Laboratory, containing the thorax and left thigh, of which we have spoken, imbedded in tan, and covered with specimens of minerals appropriately labelled. This tea-chest had been observed before, but the

contents thereof had not been examined, as they were supposed to be exclusively of a mineral character. After the remains of a human body had been discovered in this tea-chest, they were matched with that part of the body which had been taken from the privy vault, and found to correspond thereto.

They indicate that the body of an adult male, past middle age, and about five feet ten inches in height, has been discovered in the chemical department of the medical institution. When placed there, by whom, or under what circumstances, it is not for us to say. From the facts we have stated our readers can draw their own inferences. As for ourselves, we have no inclination to pre-judge the case. We have heard enough of the uncertainty of circumstantial evidence, to allow us to judge hastily of an affair like the present; and we advise our readers to suspend their judgment and weigh the successive facts which shall be elicited, with calmness and deliberation.

There is one subject connected with this matter, on which we wish to have a few serious words with our readers. During the excitement consequent upon the disappearance of Dr. Parkman, certain individuals have taken occasion to utter threats against the dissecting room of the college, and to make allegations that in the prosecution of surgical science, unfair measures are resorted to for obtaining subjects. The study of anatomy has now been legalized, and unclaimed bodies from our prisons and almshouses are delivered to the college for the instruction of the students. When these sources do not furnish a sufficient number, the subjects are imported from our southern cities at a cost not exceeding twenty-five dollars each. At this price it is entirely idle to suppose that any inducement exists to murder a man for the purposes of dissection, and the law is so stringent against the exhumation of bodies for these purposes, that these exhumations, of late years, are unheard of.

If a murder has been committed, there is not the most remote connection between it and the anatomical department of Harvard College. Were this point clearly understood, we should perceive no such manifestations of virulence against the Medical institution as we have recently seen exhibited, and no one would regret the virulence more than Dr. Parkman himself, who gave the college the land on which the present buildings are erected, with a full knowledge that in part, they were to be used for the promotion of surgical and anatomical science.

We are gratified to record that the Professors, and all persons connected with the College, have afforded every facility for a full and thorough investigation of all matters connected with the case, and that the Mayor, Marshal, and subordinate officers, have been indefatigable in their endeavors to probe the matter to the bottom. And particularly the Mayor, Marshal, and officers Clapp, Starkweather, Spurr, Fuller, and Tarlton, will please accept our acknowledgements for the assistance they have respectively rendered us, in our efforts to lay before the public, a full, correct, and impartial account of the matters which have engrossed the attention of our people since Saturday last. The investigating committee of the coroner's jury will also accept our thanks for their attention to us at the Laboratory yesterday, by which we have been able to present details which would otherwise have cost us much time and labor to procure.

One of our reporters visited Cambridge last evening, and ascertained that on Saturday night Marshal Edwards, in consequence of apprehensions by the Mayor that an attack might be made upon the residence of Professor Webster, on Garden street, assembled twenty-five special policemen, who were directed to patrol near the house, without exciting suspicions of their object. No attempt, however, was made to molest the innocent occupants of the dwelling, which is not owned by Professor Webster, but by Jonas Wyeth, Esq. Our reporter also learned some facts in relation to the personal history and family relations of the Professor. He is the son of the late Redford Webster, Esq., formerly an affluent resident of the north part of Boston, where he died some time about the year 1834, leaving about $40,000, which, we learn, is conveyed as a life estate to Professor Webster, and at his death, to his children. Young Webster, while in College, was not considered passionate or fractious, but rather chicken-hearted, as one of his college mates expresses it. He was nervous, but not quarrelsome. After he had graduated he went to Europe, and finished his medical education in England and Scotland. On his return from thence, about the time of his father's death, he stopped at the Azores, and became acquainted with Miss Hinckley, now his wife, at the port of Fayal; she was then residing with her father, who held the post of American consul at that port. He married her there, and returned to Cambridge, and lectured at the college for a year or two, when he was elected professor, in the year 1837.

Since then he has resided in Cambridge and has lectured upon chemistry, geology, mineralogy, at Cambridge and in this city: and was in receipt of a salary, and from tickets to his lectures at the medical college, at the time of his arrest, of from two to three thousand dollars, which from his carelessness about money matters, was insufficient for his wants, and kept him always in debt.

His family now consists of a wife and four daughters, the youngest sixteen years of age, and the eldest about twenty-three. The oldest is married to Mr. Dabney, the present consul

at Fayal. The other three daughters reside at Cambridge, and with their mother, are in deep affliction on account of the arrest and suspicions of their husband and father. The feeling entertained among the citizens of Cambridge, who best know Dr. Webster, is, that he is innocent of the charge on which he has been arrested, or that, if guilty, some unknown provocation must have induced the fatal attack. Our reporter called last evening at the jail, and ascertained that the Professor had passed a quiet day, having partaken of his meals regularly, and being free from that alternate excitement and gloom which characterised him for some twenty-four hours after his arrest.

Yesterday afternoon, about five o'clock, a little child fell through one of the lower windows of the college, creating a considerable crash. Instantly a crowd of some two hundred rushed to the spot, presuming it to have been the beginning of an attack on the place, but the officers in attendance, Heath, Eaton, &c., quickly interfered, explained the cause of the excitement, and the assemblage grumblingly dispersed.

The ever ready Washington Light Infantry, Capt. Cassel, relieved that gallant corps, the City Grays, Capt. Thompson, yesterday morning, and were on duty, ready for any kind of service, throughout the Sabbath, until last eveuing. Then the New England Guards, Capt. Joe Put. Bradlie, relieved them, and took their stations. Through the politeness of a sergeant of the Guard, we were introduced to Capt. Put., and ascertained that the N. E. G. were to be held in attendance for whatever might transpire. Corporal Joe Smith was full of ardor and gallantry. He is a gentleman, notwithstanding his drab coat.

Professor John W. Webster was brought up before Justice Cushing, of the Police Court, this afternoon, at half-past 1 o'clock, to undergo an examination upon the charge of murdering Dr. George Parkman, of this city, on the afternoon of Friday, the 23d. ult.

The accused being asked by Justice Cushing if he knew the substance of the charge made against him, replied that he did not, and would like to hear it. The warrant issued against him by Justice Merrill, on the evening of Friday last, was accordingly read to him by his counsel, the Hon. Franklin Dexter, and he immediately waived an examination by the advice and consent of his counsel, for the purpose of sparing the feelings of his family.

The Court therefore ordered him to be recommitted to jail until the first Monday of January, at which time he will be arraigned at the bar of the Municipal Court, to answer to the charge.

During the process, Professor Webster maintained a perfectly calm and imperturable demeanor, not the slightest tremor agitating his frame.

There were but a very few persons present at the examination; the intentions of the court having been kept profoundly secrect, until all was over. We noticed in the court Mr. Parker, District Attorney, High Sheriff Everleth, Deputy Sheriff and Coroner Pratt, and Constables Clapp, Starkweather, Tallent, Taylor, Spoon, and Stratton.

The foregoing includes all the particulars which have come to our knowledge in reference to this unfortunate and mysterious affair. The high standing of Dr. Parkman, his respectable connexions, and the hitherto unimpeachable character of Dr. Webster, known as they have been by a large circle of acquaintance; such persons being mixed up with this truly lamentable affair in the manner that they are, it is not strange that immense excitement should be the result.

It is impossible, under the excited state of the public mind to lay before our readers ALL the details, but we believe the foregoing to contain the most correct account extant.

How much will be developed at the trial of Dr. Webster, or how far he is implicated, time alone can decide; but in conclusion, let us urge our readers to forego an expression of opinion, and calmly wait the results of the Judicial Investigation.

In order to gratify our readers with regard to Dr. Webster's connexions, and standing in community, we subjoin the following memoir.

The subject of this memoir, John W. Webster, was born in Boston about the year 1790. He was the son of Redford Webster, who formerly resided in the north part of the city. The father of Mr. Webster died, we believe, in the year 1834, leaving a fortune of about forty thousand dollars. In 1823 or '24, the son travelled in Scotland in company with Professor Boue of Paris. Afterwards he went to the Azores islands, where he sojourned for some time and wrote a very creditable work upon the geology of those islands. He returned to this country in 1834, with a valuable collection of minerals, procured by him in his travels, which he sold to Harvard College for the sum of eight thousand dollars. With the assistance of Professor Treadwell, he edited, for a time, the Boston Journal of Philosophy and Arts. In the same year he again visited the Azores, on account of the ill health of his wife, and at that time expressed his intention of resigning his professorship and establishing a sulpher manufactory at St. Michaels. Upon examining the sulpher earths, they were not found to be sufficiently rich to warrant the undertaking, and he consequently abandoned his design, and returning to Cambridge he resumed his professorship.

He occupied the post of Lecturer on Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology at Harvard

College from 1834 to 1837, and in the latter year was elected Erving Professor of Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, Mineralogy and Geology. As professor, his slary was but twelve hundred dollars per annum, from which he was obliged to pay his own expenses and considering that he had only a life estate in the fortune of his father, his income was inadequate to pay his annual expenses, and he was consequently kept in an embarrassed condition.

He frequently complained that he was not properly supported by the University, and lamented that on account of pecuniary difficulties, he was unable to make that progress in his favorite sciences which he so ardently desired. As a mineralogist, he was active and indefatigable, and was continually engaged in collecting the mineralogical specimens which are indiginous to our sister states.

In the year 1837 he delivered his first course of Lectures before the Medical class of Harvard University at the Institution in Mason street, in this city, at which time he succeeded the late celebrated Professor Gorham of this city. At this period the salary of Professor Webster was raised to nineteen hundred dollars per annum.

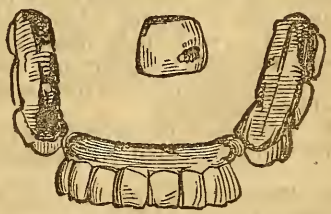
As we gave an account of the marriage and family of the Professor in our paper of yesterday, we shall conclude this short sketch by a reference to his peculiarities. He was of short stature, heavily built, with a large head, and a face strongly indicative of the nervous temperament. Like most scientific men, he was absorbed in his professional duties, and while he was inclined to profuse expenditures on the one hand, he had little or no idea of the value of money on the other. He was a man of social disposition, but at times, extremely nervous and irritable, and never more so than when pressed by a creditor for the payment of a debt which he was unable to discharge.

Those who are well acquainted with Professor Webster, and particularly most of his Cambridge friends, utterly disbelieve that he is rightfully charged with the murder of Dr. Parkman, while those who are somewhat staggered by the details which have presented themselves within the past week at the Laboratory, say that if the body found there be that of Dr. Parkman, and Professor Webster should turn out to be the assassin, it is certain that the Professor must have committed the deed under strong excitement caused by undue pertinacity on the part of the doctor.

It is well known that Dr. Parkman was very urgent in the collection of his dues, especially with a dilatory paymaster. And as it is equally well known that the Professor was slack in his payments and had been hardly pressed by the Doctor; those of the community who believe Dr. Parkman to have been killed by Professor Webster, suppose the act to have been done in the heat of personal recrimination. This is thought to have been engendered by the fact that Dr. Parkman, a few days previous to the 23d ult., enquired of the person who collected the money for tickets to the chemical lectures, whether he had sufficient funds of the Professors, to pay the mortgage note which has been the subject of so much controversy. It is known that the Professor took great umbrage at this, and immediately, on hearing the fact, appointed a meeting with Dr. Parkman at his laboratory, at 1 1-2 on the afternoon of Friday, the 23d ult. for the purpose of paying the mortgage debt, since which time, nothing definite has been learned of the Doctor.

Matters are in progress which will demonstrate in a few days, whether the body discovered on the premises of Professor Webster be really that of Doctor Parkman or not. Meanwhile, we will observe, that yesterday, the investigation of the Committee of the Coroner's Jury, were more favorable, than was previously anticipated, and if to-day it shall appear that the discovered remains have been injected with arsenic acid, or chloride of zinc, a new feature will arise in the case which will produce still greater surprise than any yet manifested. As the burnt copper cups, which were supposed to have been the remains of Doctor Parkman's coat buttons, have turned out to be instruments for chemical purposes; the silver and other metals which were supposed to have been the remains of the Doctor's watch and specie, have proved to be lead and tin: and as the supposed spots of blood turn out to be tobacco juice, when examined by a powerful microscope, it would not be surprising if the remains of the corpse should be found to have been infused with anatomical injecting matter, and thus destroy the tragic poetry with which the public have been entertained and shocked for the past week.

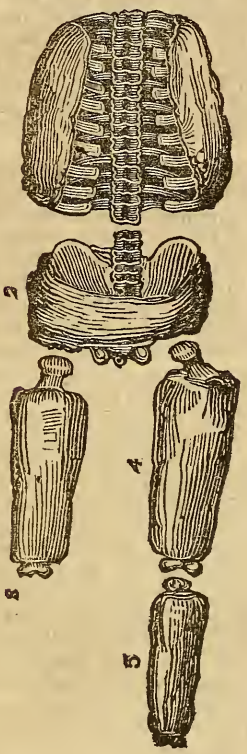
The following are the appearances of the artificial teeth and one natural tooth, taken from the furnace. It will be perceived that there are three blocks of teeth—a front and



two side blocks. They are supposed to be the work of Dr. Keep, the Dentist, and are riveted with platinum wire. The natural tooth has an external orifice from which gold or some other material appears to have been melted out. It is said that the peculiar shape of these blocks of teeth, and the peculiar

manner in which the natural tooth was filled will suggest to the dentist, who manufactured the one and filled the other, to whom the teeth belonged.

The Remains of Dr. Parkman, as collected by the committee of examining physicians, and placed together.



The above cut represents the remains of the human body which lay upon the table in the laboratory of the college in North Grove street, parts of which are particularly described in another place. As words never convey an adequate idea of material objects, and frequently cause the writer to be misunderstood, we place a representation before our readers, that they may at once perceive what is discovered and what is missing.

No. 1. Represents the vetebræ and thoracic cavity which is charred, and contains the lungs.

No. 2. Represents the pelvic cavity, covered by flesh in its lower part.

No. 3. The right thigh disarticulated from the pelvis.

No. 4. The left thigh disarticulated from the pelvis.

No. 5. The left leg disarticulated from the thigh and foot.

P. S. Dr. Keep has since identified the mineral teeth as his work.

As all the facts pertaining to the revolting transaction are of deep interest to the community, we hereunto annex some few incidents of the supposed murder.

Mr. Sawin, who drives an express wagon between this city and Cambridge, states that he has been employed for a long period of time by Professor Webster to carry bundles and parcels for him, to and from his residence and the College, as often as four or five times a week, and that up to last week he had been in the habit of going into Professor Webster's appartments in the College and leaving whatever he had, there. Last week he says Prof. Webster told him to leave any parcels which he might bring over for him in Littlefield's entry and he would get them. He also says he endeavored to open the door to Professor Webster's appartmeut and found it fastened on the inside. Among other articles which he brought over were some bundles of faggots; a portion of these were found in Professor Webster's appartment.

On Monday afternoon the Coroner's Jury visited the Medical College, for the purpose of examining the vault where the first remains were found, it having been suggested by some that the pieces found there might have floated from the vault used as a receptacle of dissected subjects in the other part of the College, and thence into the Professor's vault, where they were found. A thorough examination of the premises at once showed the impossibility of such an occurrence.

It is said that the wife of President Webster is very anxious to see him, but her friends have dissuaded her from visiting him at present. She sent to the Marshall's office on Monday, a basket of books and some articles of comfort, which were forwarded to the jail for him.

At the assembling of the Medical class in this city, at the Clinical lecture on Monday morning last, Dr. Bigelow, in behalf of the medical professors of Harvard University, and dressed them as follows:—

Gentlemen,—It is with deep regret that I am obliged to announce to the class that it consequence of the solemn and appalling events of the last week, the lectures at the Medical College will be suspended during this and the two succeeding days. This measure is rendered necessary by the existing condition of thing. It is due to the present excited state of the public feeling—it is due to the majesty of the law, the investigations of which are not yet completed; above all, it is due to the memory of Dr. George Parkman, the patron and promptor of medical science, the personal friend of many of us, and the generous benefactor of our own institution. Under any circumstances we should pause to do fitting honor to his character and virtues, but the melancholy forebodings of the last week, which have ripened into the painful conviction that he no longer survives, have cast a cloud over our

whole city, of sorrow and dismay. Most of all gentlemen, will it be felt in this school, which has been the recipient of his bounty, and towards which he has exhibited an almost parental interest, and which is carefully associated with the last known hour of his existence.

Let us bow before the decrees of Providence, and wait on its wisdom and justice. By a vote of the Faculty, in regard to the solemn events which have happened, the ordinary exercise will be postponed, until the Clinical Lecture on next Thursday, when I shall hope to meet the Class and explain to them the ulterior arrangements.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Jury of Inquest.

CORONER—JABEZ PRATT, Esq.

JURY—Osmyn Brewster, Foreman, Lewis Jones,
John L. Andrews, Robert Restieaux,
Pearl Martin, Harum Merrill,

FIRST DAY—MORNING SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 5th, 1849.

The Coroner's Jury called by Col Pratt, to sit in inquest on the remains of Dr. Parkman, found at the Medical College, in North Grove street, resumed this morning their sessions, (at the Seventh Ward Room, in Court Square,) which had been interrupted since Saturday last to allow the investigating committee an opportunity of scientifically examining the remains.

At a few minutes past 10 o'clock, the usual proclamation was made by constable Jones, by the order of the coroner; that all persons who were cognisant of any facts touching the means whereby D. George Parkman came to his death, might draw near and testify in the premises.

A PROPOSITION TO EXCLUDE REPORTERS—WILL IT IT SUCCEED?

The jury having taken their seats, the County Attorney Samuel D. Parker, Esq., at the request of the coroner and of the foreman of the jury, stated to them, that this morning he had been called upon by Mr. Osmyn Brewster, who propounded to him, as the county attorney, the question whether the laws required that the investigations of the inquest should be made in public, or whether they could not be conducted in secrecy. Mr. Parker said that the question was one of such importance, that he did not like to give his opinion officially; but he told Mr. Brewster that he would propound the question to the Hon. John H. Clifford, the State Attorney, for his solution. Mr. Clifford could not be found in this city, and Mr. Parker, therefore called on Col. Hatch, expressman, and asked him if Mr. Clifford was at New Bedford, his place of residence. Col. Hatch replied, that he believed Mr. Clifford was not at home.

Mr. Parker then stated that not being able to confer personally with Mr. Clifford, he had put the question severally to the Mayor, to one of the Justices of the Court of Cammon Pleas, and to the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court. These authorities, however, *had unanimously refused to give their opinion upon the subject.* Mr. Parker stated furthermore that he had but a moment before seen Mr. Robert G. Shaw, who expressed a strong desire that the proceedings might be conducted with the utmost secrecy consistent with the law.

He (Mr. Parker,) then advised the foreman of the jury in presence of the coroner and the rest of the jury and the spectators, to send a telegraphic despatch to Attorney General Clifford, asking his opinion in the premises, and in the meantime he would draw up his own opinion in writing on the subject.

Coroner Pratt, therefore dismissed the jury, and the witnesses summoned until 12 o'clock M., at which time they will resume their seats.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 5th, 1849.

The Coroner's jury returned to their seats at 12 o'clock this noon, according to adjournment to hear the opinion of the County Attorney, Parker, upon the legality of excluding the public from the room in which the inquest is held, and of conducting the investigations in secrecy.

Mr. Parker, the County Attorney, came in at quarter after twelve, and delivered his opinion in writing, which we give verbatim.

MR CORONER AND GENTLEMEN:—It being now ascertained that the Attorney General is where a telegraph communication cannot be made to him, I will express my opinion upon the points proposed to me.

The powers and duties of the Coroner depend in Massachusetts upon the Statute Law, and are very different here from what they are in England by the Common Law. The 150th chapter of the Revised Statutes is very explicit in many particulars, but it is silent upon some subjects. Much is left to the discretion of the Coroner, and I am of opinion, that it is wholly within the exercise of the sound discretion of that officer, whether the testimony of witnesses should be taken before the Jury of Inquest publicly or privately.

In some cases a public examination of the witnesses, and the publication of their testimony, might defeat the ends of public justice. The 10th section provides that if any person

charged by the Inquest shall not be in custody the Coroner shall have power to issue process for his apprehension. As soon as any evidence is published tending to implicate a person, he would have in most cases an opportunity to escape. In some respects the inquest of a Coroner's Jury resembles alalogous enquiry by the Grand Jury of the Criminal Court, which is always secret.

Many other evils may be suggested, which may arise, in cases of great impression and excitement, from a publication of the testimony as it progresses before the Coroner's Jury, and which would be detrimental to the public justice, in pre-occupying and perhaps mis-directing public opinion, creating great difficulty in getting an impartial pannel of jurors at the trial, exposing the material witnesses to personal attacks, attempts to tamper with them, or inducements to avoid, &c.

I have no doubt of the power of the Coroner to decide whether the examination of witnesses shall be public or private. It is within his official discretion, to be exercised in each particular case according to the circumstances of that case; and in this case, it is his privilege and duty to decide the mode of proceeding. If it his wish, or the Inquest desire that I should express my opinion upon the question of expediency on the present occasion, I do not hesitate to advise that the proceedings before the Coroner's Jury be private up to the time of the signing of the verdict.

I have consulted several eminent gentlemen of the bar, and several persons in high official station, and there is no difference of opinion, —they all concur in the same opinion. I have asked the friends of the deceased, and some of the friends of a person supposed to be interested in these proceedings. I have stated the matter to the eminent counsel of that person. He has no desire to have the examination private, and expressed no desire to have it public and thought he should not interfere in any way to affect the Coroner's decision.

(Signed) Samuel D. Parker,
Att'y of the Commonwealth, in County of Suffolk.

Mr. Parker having concluded, he was asked by Coroner Pratt if he thought it was expedient to conduct the investigation in private, to which he answered that he did so consider it, for many reasons, among which were the danger of injury to which the persons testifying might be subjected by having their testimony made public, and also from the injury that the family of the deceased might sustain from having the contents of the papers and documents which would be used in the course of the proceedings, made public.

Hereupon, Jabes Pratt, the coroner, rose and addressed the representatives of the press who were present, upon the course which he felt himself authorized and bound to take.—He said that though he had performed the duties of coroner in the county for fifteen years, he had never been called upon to preside at an inquest which gave him so much pain as the present one. He had always manifested a disposition to accommodate the press upon all occasions in every way he possibly could, and he regretted exceedingly that the circumstances were such as made it his imperative duty to exclude them from the presence of the jury. He repeated the remarks made by Mr. Parker, on the expediency of this secrecy, and then announced his decision, that the impartial administration of public justice, and the welfare of the families and friends of both the accused and the deceased, required the present investigations to be conducted in secret. Thereupon the room was ordered to be cleared.

A chemical analysis has been made of the contents of the veins and arteries which were dissected out of the thighs and leg on Monday afternoon for examination, and neither arsenic acid nor chloride of zinc have been found mixed with them. The absence of these two chemicals conclusively proves, therefore, that the body from which the veins and arteries were taken was not one which had been brought to the college as a subject for dissection.

A portion of the cinders found in the furnace of the laboratory of Professor Webster have also been rigidly analyzed, and a small quantity of gold and silver have thus far been found, and the small quantity of each of the metals found would seem to indicate that they proceed from the melting of the filling of the partly decayed natural tooth and the plate of the mineral teeth identified as Dr. Parkman's.

A further and more rigid examination has also been made of the conglomerated masses of lead and tin which were also found in the laboratory furnace, and minute particles of silver have been discovered in the composition of the fused metals, but in such very small quantities that it is supposed that this metal was origidally contained in either the lead or tin, as it is often found in the natural state.

The result of the examination of the contents of the arteries and veins proving, as it does, that the remains from which they were taken do not form a part of a subject for dissection, adds a new and important link to the fearful chain of circumstantial evidence which at this moment surrounds Professor Webster.

We learn that a large bunch of skeleton or newly filed keys have been found in the drawers of a bereau in Prof. Webster's laboratory, which are said to give the possessor an entrance to every room in the medical college.

We here close, for the present, our account of this most startling tragedy, hoping "never to hear of its like again!"

Goodspeed's
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